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FROM: GENERAL WHEELER, CJCS

TO : GENERAL WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV

INFO: ADMIRAL SHARP, CINCPAC

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REF JCS 02430

1. THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MENTIONED IN REFERENCE CITED PRESENTED ITS FINDINGS TO THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY LAST NIGHT. AS I STATED IN MY EARLIER MESSAGE, THE REQUIREMENTS YOU HAVE EXPRESSED FOR ADDITIONAL FORCES CAN BE MET ONLY BY TAKING FAR-REACHING ACTIONS INCLUDING A CALL-UP OF RESERVES, EXTENSION OF TERMS OF SERVICE, AND A REQUEST FOR AN INCREASE IN THE DEFENSE BUDGET FOR 1969. PERTINENT TO THE PROBLEM OF REINFORCING YOU IS THE FACT THAT THE CONUS STRATEGIC RESERVE IS BADLY DEPLETED TO THE POINT WHERE WE CAN PROVIDE TO YOU ONLY A PORTION OF THE FIRST INCREMENT AND OF THAT PORTION ONLY A FRACTION, AS SET FORTH IN THE SCHEDULE BELOW, CAN BE DEPLOYED TO SOUTH VIETNAM BY 1 MAY. I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY HAS NOT YET APPROVED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE; HOWEVER, HE INSTRUCTED ME LAST NIGHT TO INFORM YOU OF THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.

2. THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS, NOT YET APPROVED, ARE OF DIRECT INTEREST TO YOU:

A. AUTHORIZE IMMEDIATELY THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE THREE TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRONS (TWO AIR FORCE AND ONE MARINE) DEFERRED FROM PROGRAM 5. THESE AIR UNITS WOULD BE OVER AND ABOVE THE FOUR

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INFANTRY BATTALIONS ALREADY PLANNED FOR DEPLOYMENT IN LATE MARCH AND EARLY APRIL.

B. AUTHORIZE AT ONCE THE DEPLOYMENTS TO VIETNAM OF AN APPROXIMATELY 22,000 ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL. COMPRISING THIS FORCE ARE THE FOLLOWING:

(1) SIX TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRONS (3,000 MEN) WHICH CAN BE DEPLOYED: TWO SQUADRONS ON 1 APRIL; THREE SQUADRONS ON 1 MAY; AND ONE SQUADRON ON 1 JUNE.

(2) ONE NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (700 MEN) TO BE DEPLOYED ON 1 MAY.

(3) 4TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE MINUS (18,100 MEN) CONSISTING OF THREE BLTS, FOUR TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRONS, PLUS COMMAND AND COMBAT AND SERVICE SUPPORT ELEMENTS TO BE DEPLOYED SO AS TO CLOSE IN-COUNTRY BY 15 JUNE.

C. INITIATE A RESERVE CALL-UP AND TAKE OTHER NECESSARY ACTIONS TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE OUR STRATEGIC RESERVE IN THE UNITED STATES. (THESE ACTIONS, IF APPROVED BY HIGHEST AUTHORITY, WILL PLACE US IN A POSITION TO MEET YOUR FULL REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FORCES AT TIMES YOU SPECIFIED SHOULD HIGHEST AUTHORITY DECIDE TO DO SO.)

3. YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THAT OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE FURTHER FORCES DEPENDS UPON A RESERVE CALL-UP INITIATED NOT LATER THAN 15 MARCH. I BELIEVE I TOLD YOU THAT THE MARINES CANNOT SUPPORT THEIR MARINE FORCES NOW IN SOUTH VIETNAM BECAUSE OF THE DIVERSIONS FROM AND DEPLETION OF THEIR TRAINING BASE CAUSED BY THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE 27TH RLT. THE 4TH MEF MINUS REFERRED TO ABOVE WILL CONTAIN BOTH REGULAR AND RESERVE MARINE UNITS. YOU WILL

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RECOGNIZE ALSO THAT CERTAIN UNITS, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE PACKAGE PRESENTED TO THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE READY AND DEPLOYED BY 15 JUNE, WILL BE IN A STATE TO BE DEPLOYED IN JULY AND THE ENSUING MONTHS.

4. BEARING IN MIND THAT THE FOREGOING ARE AS YET MERELY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY, BASED UPON OUR CAPABILITIES, I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL WISH TO COMMENT UPON THESE RECOMMENDATIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, YOU SHOULD KNOW THERE IS TREMENDOUS INTEREST HERE IN YOUR PROGRAM FOR IMPROVING THE SIZE AND COMBAT CAPABILITIES OF THE RVNAF. THIS AND OTHER FACTORS CAUSE RELUCTANCE TO ADVISE THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE NOW FULLY MEETING YOUR REQUEST AND, INSTEAD, THE RECOMMENDATION THAT HE RESERVE THE DECISION ON FORCES OTHER THAN THOSE SET FORTH IN PARA 2 PENDING DEVELOPMENTS IN SVN AND ELSEWHERE. WARM REGARDS.

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